

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6287

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1718

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, VN

SUBJECT: OBSERVATIONS IN VIETNAM

1. WEST GERMAN JOURNALIST PETER SCHOLL-LATOUR, IN PEKING EN ROUTE BACK TO EUROPE AFTER MAKING A DOCUMENTARY FILM IN VIETNAM, RELATES THAT MANY VIETNAMESE HE ENCOUNTERED SEEMED CONCERNED ABOUT TENSIONS ALONG THE SINO-VIETNAMESE BORDER. INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE CHINESE MOVING BOUNDARY MARKERS HAD NOT LED TO ANY VIOLENCE, BUT VARIOUS VIETNAMESE CITED THEM AS SYMPTOMATIC OF A CHANGED RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA, AND PROOF OF A PROVERB, "WHEN TROUBLE ENDS IN THE SOUTH IT STARTS IN THE NORTH." A HIGH VIETNAMESE OFFICIAL (WE DID NOT GET THE NAME) ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WERE PROBLEMS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CHINA BUT EVINCED CONFIDENCE THAT THESE WOULD BE SORTED OUT.

2. SCHOLL-LATOUR SAID HE WAS REFUSED PERMISSION TO VISIT THE PART OF VIETNAM ADJOINING CHINA. HE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE A BUILDUP OF VIETNAMESE FORCES THERE, BUT OFFERED NO EVIDENCE.

3. SCHOLL-LATOUR, WHO HAD BEEN IN SAIGON UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE ITS FALL, SAID THAT ON THIS TRIP HE MET A NUMBER OF OLD ACQUAINTANCES
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THERE WHO WERE GLUMLY AWAITING RURAL WORK ASSIGNMENTS.

DEAN

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NNN

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